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Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 18
November 3, 1962 -- 10:00 AM


Director McCone presented the intelligence summary, emphasizing reports about the construction of a submarine base in Cuba. He called attention to the increasing number of reports of missiles being stored in Cuban caves.

Secretary McNamara reported that a peripheral flight of a U-2 about five miles off the west coast of Cuba had been authorized by the President. The weather for reconnaissance was poor. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have stated a requirement for fourteen low-level sorties, covering harbors, roads, storage areas, the IL-28 air base, and Banes, which is suspect as a possible submarine base site. Secretary McNamara said he recommended fewer low-level flights.

Mr. McCone predicted that it would take from two weeks to a month to get the Soviet missiles out of Cuba.

The President, commenting on the recommended low-level flight over the port of Havana, said he thought this target would be a day off and deferred authorizing this reconnaissance mission.

Secretary Rusk called attention to the presence in Havana of Mikoyan and stated his view that the port of Havana was not a good target for today.



The President authorized three low-level sorties of two planes each, one over the IL-28 base, the second over the Banes area, and the third over the San Julian port area.

General Taylor asked that the President authorize a major aerial reconnaissance mission Sunday or Monday in order to see what had been moved in Cuba. He said we need pictures of the ports in order to know what was being loaded on outgoing ships and pictures of assembly areas where Soviet equipment is being moved prior to being shipped out.

The President said that he wanted by Sunday or Monday a recommendation on the future use of U-2 planes. Secretary Rusk said daily pictures of the IL-28 planes are most important.

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Secretary Rusk referred to a preliminary draft of inspection arrangements. Certain measures can be taken if Cuba agrees, but other measures will have to be taken if Cuba refuses to accept inspection arrangements satisfactory to us. He noted that there was no real resistance from anywhere except Cuba to the continuance of overflights.

The President said the major issue is the inspection of outgoing Soviet ships which will be returning Soviet missiles to the USSR. He said he believed we would have to work out some way of counting the outgoing missiles in order to be certain that all were removed. He asked that we work out what arrangements we think we must have and what we think the Soviets would accept.

Deputy Under Secretary Johnson suggested that the International Red Cross inspectors might look at cargo being loaded on outgoing Soviet ships to be certain that it had been properly identified on the ships' manifests.

Director McCone said we had seen thirty missiles in Cuba and we estimate that forty-eight were brought in. He agreed that we must work out some way of counting the outgoing missiles.

Secretary Rusk said one major problem was how to inspect armaments in Cuba after the strategic missiles had been removed. One way to do this would be to propose an atom-free zone in Latin America. Treaty inspectors could go to Cuba to ensure that no nuclear weapons remained on the island or were introduced.

The President requested a paper stating exactly how we understand the agreement we have reached with the Russians. He wanted for his consideration the instructions to be sent to McCloy to govern McCloy's talk with Kuznetsov. He suggested that we raise with the Russians the question of Cuban caves as an illustration of the need for an inspection procedure which would reassure us that the missiles were removed, even if we did not inspect each missile. He suggested that the New York negotiating group, including Ambassador Stevenson, be asked to come to Washington later today to discuss inspection arrangements with the Executive Committee. He made it clear that we could not live with a Soviet submarine base in Cuba. He wanted to hold Khrushchev to every single one of the points he had agreed to. He felt that we should insist on the general demilitarization of Cuba and he emphasized again the serious

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situation which would arise if there were an incident involving one of our U-2 planes and the SAM sites in Cuba.

Secretary Rusk commented that we must have acceptable inspection on the ground in Cuba before we make any commitment about our not invading the island.

Mr. McCone noted that evidence to date indicates the missiles are being dismantled, but apparently everything else is being built up, including communication complexes and possibly even a submarine base.

The President said he wanted to see detailed instructions covering the negotiations on inspection. He thought that we should give the Russians the impression that because the missiles are mobile and can be put back in place, we will have to insist on demilitarization of Cuba.

Ambassador Thompson suggested that we ask the Russians if they intend to keep a military base in Cuba. We would tell the Russians that this was not negotiable.

At this point the following joined the Executive Committee: AEC Chairman Seaborg; Commissioner Haworth; Dr. Wiesner; and Mr. Kaysen.

A draft announcement of the ending of our current nuclear test series was read and discussed.

In response to the President's question, Dr. Seaborg said that the Commission tests in 1963 would be for the purpose of exploiting the Ripple development. He thought that by May we would be in a position to resume tests above ground. He acknowledged that weapons development would be possible if testing were limited to underground shots.

Secretary Rusk opposed stating in the announcement a time limit on our suspension of testing. He did not want us to tie our hands because at a later time we might have to resume tests in order to keep pressure on the Russians.

The President commented that we had a greater capability than the Russians to conduct useful underground tests. He felt that we would not lose if the Russians did not conduct atmospheric tests and we continued our underground testing.

The draft release was revised and approved, it being understood that underground tests would continue.

Bromley Smith

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